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RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 7279
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 1357
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 002197

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SUBJECT: ANC OFFICIAL RAISES CONCERNS ABOUT STATE OF THE PARTY

REF: PRETORIA 01932

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Summary

¶1. (SBU) Dumisani Ntuli, the spokesperson for the African National Congress (ANC) in Gauteng Province, told Poloffs on September 30 that the party remains torn between supporters of President Jacob Zuma and former President Thabo Mbeki. Ntuli, who clearly falls into the latter camp, projected that infighting would keep the ANC from achieving its campaign promises and put the party's focus on the 2012 party congress rather than on the 2011 local elections. He projected that any failure to improve service delivery ahead of the local elections would hurt the party and the Zuma administration. End Summary.

ANC Spokesperson Offers Candid Assessment of Party

¶2. (SBU) Dumisani Ntuli, whose remarks made it clear that he most likely supported Mbeki over Zuma for the party's top position, met with Poloffs for lunch on September 30 to discuss the situation within the ANC. Ntuli admitted the ANC is a "complete mess" and remains as divided now as it was in the aftermath of the party's 2007 congress when Zuma beat Mbeki for the party presidency. He views the rift between those who support Zuma and those who remain loyal to Mbeki as the biggest challenge facing the organization and sees party members who favored Mbeki waiting to speak up again and to assume leadership positions in the months ahead. Ntuli said, "The pro-Mbeki people are silent, waiting for their chance to speak out."

¶3. (SBU) Beyond the rift between Zuma and Mbeki supporters, he noted that the organization remains disunited along multiple other lines. He said, "There are the diehard Zuma supporters, the pro-labor people, the communists, the pro-Mbeki people, and no one speaks for the same things." Party leaders are seeking ways to restructure and unify the party so younger members understand the history and the values of the ANC. However, according to Ntuli, these efforts are not going well and will only lead to failure. He said, "The younger cadres have no interest in the history of the ANC. They want access to jobs and personal enrichment." Worse than the lack of interest in history, he claimed, is that they will not listen to, or respect, senior officials.

Ntuli lamented that party members are mostly focused on jockeying for positions to be decided upon at the 2012 national congress. He said, "The party isn't even focused on the 2011 local elections."

¶4. (SBU) He fears that the party's lack of focus might contribute to poor service delivery, which in turn will hurt the party in the local elections. He said, "Look what the Mbeki government did over the past 10 years. Mbeki's ANC delivered on the Mafikeng and Stellenbosch resolutions (party resolutions). The Zuma government will not come close to delivering." Failure to deliver will only strength the ANC's political opponents, according to Ntuli. He projected the ANC is worried that it might lose to the Democratic Alliance in Tshwane metro (Pretoria). He added, "We have big internal (party) problems in Tshwane." According to him, the problems stem from infighting over government positions. The ANC Youth League branches in Tshwane want to assume greater control over the city council and force out any official associated with Mbeki. (Note: See Reftel for more information. End Note.)

¶5. (SBU) Ntuli projected that the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) may not succeed in getting labor brokers abolished. COSATU in recent weeks has called for amendments to the Labor Relations Act, which would outlaw outsourcing and subcontracting of employees (processes that are currently run by the brokers). According to Ntuli, the ANC will not give in to COSATU's demands because most of the labor brokers are owned by senior ANC officials such as Tokyo Sexwale and Cyril Ramaphosa. He argued that the labor brokers perform a useful service within the economy and must be permitted to operate.

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Comment

¶6. (SBU) Ntuli's comments on the ANC underscore how internal problems continue to distract the ruling party. Despite realignment of leadership positions in some provinces around the country, the ANC since the April national election has projected an image of unity and satisfaction with the Zuma team. Ntuli's remarks raises questions about whether such projections are false. Moreover, his statements show that even though Mbeki supporters are quiet, they have not disappeared from the ranks.
GIPS